रुपए है। वर्ष 1997-98 के लिए औसत मासिक घाटा 487.30 लाख रुपए है।

Monitoring of rescue work at Malpa

1247. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted any highly empowered Committee to keep vigil on the rescue work provcided to the victims at Malpa of Pithoragarh district and its adioining areas in U.P.; and

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the details of the action taken by Government against the officials, if found responsible for mis-utilization of rescue work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) No High Powered Committee has been constituted by the Government of India in this regard. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has, however, reportedly conducted a Magisterial enquiry regarding number of people dead, injured and missing due to landslides in Malpa village of Pithoragarh district. The State Government has reportedly paid relief assistance to the affected persons and payment of relief assistance is continuing.

According to the State Government, no official was found guilty.

Strategy to counter price rise of Agricultural Products

1248. SHRI KHAGEN DAS:
SHRI E. BALANANDAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state

(a) whether country is suffering due to continued difference of opinion between crucial Ministries in evolving a proper strategy to counter the present price rise in the country;

(b) whether it is a fact that while the Minister of Commerce is opposed to stop export of onion and other agricultural products in one hand and on the other, the Minister of Agriculture is protesting against the decision to bring onion and other agricultural products under OGL; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that both these two Ministers are saying that the policy would hurt the interest of the Indian farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) to (c) No, sir. The export and import policies in respect of onion and other agricultural commodities are formulated, keeping in view the nation's food security, maximising farm incomes and increasing foreign exchange earnings. The domestic availability and prevailing prices of these commodities in the domestic market dictate the continued export or the need to import a given commodity. The continued shortage of onion in the country has necessitated the banni of the exports of onion till 1st January, 1999. Imports of onion, the other hand, have been placed under OGL through a notifiction issued by DGFT on 15th October, 1998 with a view to augment its availability in the country.

Development of terminator seed

1249. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of a proposal for developing a Terminator seed for the development of plant varieties into which disease and pest resistant genes are injected rather than using pesticides, put forward by the global food giant Monsanto in collaboration

with the Bangalore-based Indian institute of Science;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the farmers in Karnataka have already started agitation against Monsanto as reported in the Hindustan times on 21st November, 1998; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL):

(a) and (b) Indian Institute of Science has entered into a tripartite agreement with the Society for Innovation and Development and M/s. Monsanto Enterprises Pvt. Ltd. on 26.5.1997 for carrying out research in the form of joint project in respect of the following areas:—

— development biology and physiology (plant and animal).

— advanced genomics and molecular markers (plant and animal).

— information technology and gene/ molecule sourcing.

— gene expression and regulation.

— plant transformation and tissue culture.

— protein engineering, structure and function.

— combinatorial chemistry and high throughout screening methods.

— synthetic genes and chemicals.

There is no proposal to develop terminator genes under the agreement.

(c) and (d) Government of Karnataka have reported that a few farmers have started agitation in Karnataka against Monsanto. As per the press reports, the agitators are demanding that Monsanto trial be discontinued as they claim that they were not in the interests of the farmers. The activists of a farmer's outfit indulged in activities like uprooting and burning of Bolgard Cotton in two experimental stations. The permission given by Department of biotechnology is for carrying out trails by Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company of transgenic BT cotton, and not for terminator seed. The concerned Department are seized of te matter.

Modified crop Insurance Scheme

1250. MISS FRIDA TOPNO
SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK:
SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU:
SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
SHRI S. AGNIRAJ:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a Modified Crop insurance Scheme (MCIS) as a part of Comprehensive Agriculture Plan;

(b) if so, the salient details of the Modified Crop Insurance Scheme (MCIS) and its coverage, risk benefits to the farmers, administrative set up, crop-wise premium, compensation policy and types of crops to be covered under insurance catering to specific regional needs etc;

(c) whether Government will subsidize partly the acturial premium to be paid;

(d) what are the estimated projections of premium collection and number of farmers to be covered with State-wise break-up; and

(e) time schedule for implementation of the revised crop insurance scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL):

(a) to (e) It is proposed to introduce a Modified Comprehensive Crop Insurance Scheme (MCCIS) from Kharif 1999 season onwards. Some of the following features are proposed to be factored into the proposed MCCIS:—

(i) It will cover loanee as well as non-loanee farmers.